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Food and Home Notes

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Fresh hams should be treated the same as fresh pork—cooked to an internal temperature of 170°, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture. Because they aren't cured, cooked fresh hams look and taste more like pork roasts than what many people usually think of as "ham".

* * *

How long can you store canned hams? Unopened canned hams, whether they must be refrigerated or not, should be stored no longer than six months, according to USDA. Once open, any canned ham should be refrigerated. Use it within seven days.

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Labels on some hams don't say whether the hams need to be cooked or not—if in doubt, U.S. Department of Agriculture meat inspectors suggest that you assume such hams must be cooked before eating.

* * *

To maintain keeping quality in meat and poultry products, be sure to wrap freezer-bound and refrigerator foods airtight.

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FOOD PRICES --- Wahappened?

We want more—we have more—and we spend more on food as everything else! Compared to what? Maybe to 20 years ago? We are eating about twice as much beef per person as we did 20 years ago, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture statistics. Real disposable income per person in the first half of 1973 ran about 11 percent higher than in the first half of 1972.

We like to eat out, too. And that runs high. Expenditures for meals eaten away from home rose 8% in 1972. We are eating more prepared, convenience foods and the costs of this built-in service is showing up; it costs more.

How do we spend that \$10 bill for food? For farm-produced foods in 1972 we divided the money this way—meat \$3.22; dairy \$1.75; bakery and cereal goods \$1.47; processed fruits and vegetables \$.98; fresh vegetables \$.67; fresh fruits \$.45; poultry \$.39; fats and oils \$.34; eggs \$.29; and miscellaneous foods \$.44.

Food prices have increased less than—transportation (it went up 55%), less than other consumer items: clothing up 58%; housing up 64% or medical care up 123%.

A new publication (Aug.'73) called "What's Happened to Food Prices?" is available free from Special Reports Office, 407A, Office of Communication, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250.

National Forests have much to offer --- camping, hiking, picnicking, and sightseeing. You could list a dozen reasons why one might like to spend the waning days of late summer and early fall on a visit to western North Carolina -- and the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest (in the Nantahala National Forest). Few tourists realize how many acres of forest lands are located in the western part of North Carolina--a convenient easy-to-get to section of the country for much of the population.

One section of the forest is known as "The Poet's Forest", a memorial to the well known poet from New Jersey, Joyce Kilmer, who died during the first World War. He was best known for his poem called "Trees", which is still a favorite of school children. This site in the forest was selected because the 3,840 acres of forest is presumed to be the type that would lead a poet--any poet--to be inspired with the beautiful trees, unique in this section. There are more than 100 species of trees here...some more than 20 feet in circumference and 100 feet in height. The forest is, today, still wilderness-like. Elevations in the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest range from 2,040 feet to 5,380. The Unicoi Mountains forms its north-western boundary.

There is also an outstanding variety of shrubs, vines, ferns, mosses, and lichens--and spring wildflowers, which add a bit of color to the setting. Each season lends a special touch. Summer temperatures dip into the 60's at night and the area has a moderate climate during most of the year, except for the summer months.

A visitor can find yellow poplar, hemlock, sycamore, basswood, beech, several species of oak and many others. Man has not disturbed the forest here--but it changes nevertheless. Some trees die from insects and diseases.

----- to NORTH CAROLINA

The sunlight that comes through these openings helps vegetation that would be eliminated without occasional sunlight. On the forest floor are remnants of the once magnificent American chestnut tree. The chestnut blight disease, accidentally introduced into this country from Asia, killed off all the mature trees in the Nation.

What else might one see? You could spot a deer -- or a fox, see ruffled grouse and wild turkeys. The sunlight which helps wildflowers is not available later in the year when the hardwood trees are covered with shade producing leaves. There are foot trails and a small picnic area with a short access road. Camping is available along a mountain



Joyce Kilmer Forest (N.C.)

stream at Horse Cove campground near the Memorial Forest, all of which is under the supervision of the Forest Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

It is no wonder that this ideal area was thought about when a site was to be selected in memory of the poet, Joyce Kilmer. If you cherish the sight of a tree, or many trees, and enjoy the forest--if you enjoy the wonder of nature--this will be a favorite in your travel memories.

(The Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest can be reached by taking U.S. Highway 129 n.w. from Robbinsville, N.C., for eight miles and then turning west on N.C. Highway 113 $\frac{1}{4}$ for two and one-half miles and then taking Forest Service roads 416 and 305 for about five miles.)

FOOD

SAFETY FIRST -

and

What You DO With It.

You've shopped carefully — and selectively, and bought only the amount and kind of foods you can store properly and use during the time of optimum quality. You've handled the fruits and vegetables carefully to prevent injury. You have bought meats that are graded and inspected by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. You've bought only clean eggs; no cracks in the shell. Your packages and canned foods are all in good condition when you brought them from the store. What else can you do? Store your food properly!

If you do not carefully store perishable foods in the home, all the food you have carefully selected may lose quality, freshness, nutritive value, or even spoil.

Storage needs vary. Foods vary in the degree of temperature and the amount of moisture needed to retain quality in storage. Check your refrigerator—temperature should be below 40° F. A freezer cabinet should be maintained at 0° F. for prolonged storage of food. If it does not register zero or below, it should not be used to hold frozen foods for prolonged storage—not more than a few days. A thermometer will be useful in checking the different locations in the refrigerator or your freezer to make certain it's at the proper level.

Some guides to use—breads may be stored in their original wrapper in bread-box or refrigerator. Bread keeps its freshness longer at room temperature than in the refrigerator. In hot, humid weather, however, bread is better protected against mold in the refrigerator than in the bread-box. Breads retain good quality for 2 to 3 months if frozen. Spices should be stored away from the heat of a range or a refrigerator unit. Most fats and oils need protection from air, heat, and light. For long storage, keep oils in the refrigerator. Some of these oils may cloud and solidify in the refrigerator — but this is not harmful. For meat and poultry storage follow the USDA chart.

PRODUCT STORAGE PERIOD (To maintain quality)		
	Refrigerator 35° to 40° F.	Freezer 0° F.
FRESH MEATS	DAYS	MONTHS
Roasts (Beef and Lamb).....	3 to 5	8 to 12
Roasts (Pork and Veal).....	3 to 5	4 to 8
Steaks (Beef).....	3 to 5	8 to 12
Chops (Lamb and Pork).....	3 to 5	3 to 4
Ground and Stew Meats.....	1 to 2	2 to 3
Variety Meats.....	1 to 2	3 to 4
Sausage (Pork).....	1 to 2	1 to 2
PROCESSED MEATS		
Bacon.....	7	1
Frankfurters.....	7	½
Ham (Whole).....	7	1 to 2
Ham (Half).....	3 to 5	1 to 2
Ham (Slices).....	3	1 to 2
Luncheon Meats.....	3 to 5	Freezing
Sausage (Smoked).....	7	not recom- mended
Sausage (Dry and Semi-Dry) 14 to 21		
COOKED MEATS		
Cooked Meats and Meat Dishes.....	1 to 2	2 to 3
Gravy and Meat Broth.....	1 to 2	2 to 3
FRESH POULTRY		
Chicken and Turkey (Whole)	1 to 2	12
Chicken and Turkey (Pieces)	1 to 2	6
Duck and Goose (Whole)	1 to 2	.6
Giblets.....	1 to 2	3
COOKED POULTRY		
Pieces (Covered with Broth) 1 to 2		6
Pieces (Not Covered).....	1 to 2	1
Cooked Poultry Dishes.....	1 to 2	6
Fried Chicken.....	1 to 2	4

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
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